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CURBS ON SECRETS PLANNED BY AIDES

Top Administration Officials Agree on Need for Controls to Limit Disclosures

By GERALD M. BOYD
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 2 — Senior Reagan Administration officials agreed today on a need to increase internal curbs to control the unauthorized disclosure of classified materials, but disagreed on what form such restrictions should take, Administration sources said today.

The sources, who asked not to be identified, said that Donald T. Regan, the White House chief of staff, was among those who questioned recommendations submitted by Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, President Reagan's national security adviser, as the basis for a new Administration policy on more restrictive measures to end leaks.

Mr. Reagan presided over an hour-long White House meeting of his top foreign policy and intelligence advisers, the National Security Planning Group. One White House source said the private session was a "full discussion" in which each senior official presented his views on what steps should be taken.

Proposals by Poindexter

The sources said that Admiral Poindexter began the meeting by making a presentation that included a broad set of proposals developed by a working group of middle-level Administration intelligence officials.

Officials at the White House and elsewhere in the Administration have said previously that the proposals included limiting the number of people with access to classified information, reducing the amount of information that is classified, increasing the use of polygraph tests in the investigation of unauthorized disclosures and creating a new unit within the Federal Bureau of Investigation to examine unauthorized disclosures.

The sources said today that there was general agreement among the senior officials present on the need for further curbs within the Administration as a form of additional "discipline."

There was also general agreement, the sources said, that the news media have acted irresponsibly in disclosing information damaging to the national security.

Warning to News Media

In recent weeks, William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, has warned the news media that they could be prosecuted for publishing classified information. He has asked the Justice Department to look into a report broadcast by NBC News.

One White House official said that after the meeting Mr. Reagan retired into the Oval Office with several advisers, raising the possibility that a final decision might have come at that point. Frequently, the President reserves judgment in such situations until he can consider the matter with a few key advisers.

The sources said that Mr. Regan's concerns involved how to best curb unauthorized disclosures. He and the other senior officials participating made what one source called "forceful" presentations of their views.

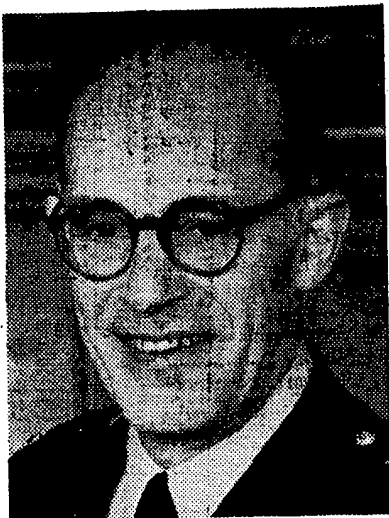
At the senior White House staff meeting this morning, Mr. Poindexter had described the planning group's meeting as one that would deal with the subject of "authorized" and "unauthorized" disclosures. However, one Administration official said later that no need existed for the senior officials to discuss disclosures that were sanctioned. Such disclosures are made by officials in order to build support for the Administration's foreign policy objectives.

Although the sources would not describe the other disagreements, Secretary of State George P. Shultz has previously protested a directive requiring the use of polygraph tests to investigate unauthorized disclosures. The directive, which Mr. Reagan had signed, was revised to end mandatory testing.

The meeting was the most recent manifestation of Administration concern over unauthorized disclosures, which White House officials have said has increased in recent months. In particular, Administration officials have expressed concern over intelligence disclosures connected with Libya and reports about a classified intelligence operation that surfaced in connection with the trial of Ronald W. Pelton, a former National Security Agency employee who is accused of spying for the Soviet Union.

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LT. GEN. WILLIAM E. ODOM.
... proposed threat of prosecution

Administration Seems to Soften Press Warning

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

The White House appeared to take a softer line yesterday on the administration's controversial warning to journalists at an espionage trial in Baltimore to confine their reporting to the government's disclosures.

White House spokesman Edward Djerejian also declined to expand the warning concerning the trial of accused Soviet spy Ronald W. Pelton into a general rule that might be applicable to reporting on national security matters.

"The immediate focus [is] at the Pelton trial, and the information that is involved at that trial," Djerejian told reporters. He said there is "a larger question" beyond that, but he went on to describe that larger issue as how the administration can best prevent leaks of sensitive information by its officials.

"It's not a question of going after the press," Djerejian said. "I think that's been hyped."

Central Intelligence Agency Director William J. Casey and Lt. Gen. William E. Odom, the director of the National Security Agency, issued a joint statement Wednesday following the publication of stories about the first day of the Pelton

trial. It "cautioned" reporters "against speculation and reporting details beyond the information actually released at trial."

The statement, approved in advance by President Reagan's national security affairs adviser, John M. Poindexter, warned that such reporting would not constitute "authorized disclosures" and might cause "substantial harm to the national security."

A final sentence in a draft composed by Odom admonished journalists that they could be prosecuted under a 1950 law prohibiting publication of classified information about U.S. code-breaking activities. That line, however, was deleted from the official statement.

In opening statements at the trial of Pelton, a former mid-level staff officer in the National Security Agency's Soviet communications unit, the government made what many regarded as extraordinary disclosures about U.S. abilities to intercept and decode Soviet messages. Subsequent news stories and broadcasts contained background and details that, combined with leaks over the last six months, concerned Casey and Odom, the NSA director said.

By Thursday, Casey, facing criticism from journalists and First Amendment authorities, told The Associated Press he was not trying to "scuttle the First Amendment." Criticized especially for seeming to say that journalistic "speculation" could result in criminal prosecution, Casey added that "if I had to do it over again, I might not use that word."

Djerejian agreed that "a better word than speculation could have been found."

He also said the White House endorsed only "the general thrust" of the Casey-Odom statement. "In no way do we mean to imply, by the use of 'speculation,' prior press censorship or press censorship or in any way impinging on the freedoms of the press to report information and events," Djerejian said.

Casey was scheduled to be at the White House yesterday for a ceremony at which Reagan awarded a Distinguished Service Medal posthumously to Navy Capt. Joseph J. Rochefort, whose long-unrecog-

nized code-breaking successes led to the U.S. victory at Midway Island in World War II. Casey, for unexplained reasons, did not come to the ceremony, but a White House official joked that if he had, "He was going to come with instructions telling the press not to speculate on how Rochefort did it."

Staff writer Lou Cannon
contributed to this report.